

Claims

1. An ice-making machine which comprises:
 - an ice-cube casting unit which is generally horizontally-disposed and has a plurality of compartments which are open at their bottoms;
 - a closure member for sealing against the underside of the ice-casting unit to close the bottoms of said compartments;
 - means for filling said compartments with water;
 - cooling means for freezing the water in said compartments; and
 - means for moving said closure member to a downwardly-inclined position to allow ice cubes to fall from said compartments and slide down into a receptacle.
2. An ice-making machine as claimed in claim 1 in which said closure member is pivotally mounted.
3. An ice-making machine as claimed in claim 1 in which a motor-driven or solenoid-driven device is provided to move said closure member between its raised and lower positions.
4. An ice-making machine as claimed in claim 1 in which the tops of said compartment are open.

5. An ice-making machine as claimed in claim 4, in which said means for filling said compartments with water comprises a water reservoir and means for pumping water, or arranged for the gravity feed of water, from said reservoir and into said compartments.

6. An ice-making machine as claimed in claim 1 in which said cooling means comprises coolant tubes which run alongside said compartments.

7. An ice-making machine as claimed in claim 6, in which said compartments are arranged in rows with said coolant tubes running alongside respective said rows.

8. An ice-making machine as claimed in claim 1, further comprising heating means for heating the sides of the ice cubes sufficiently to release them from their said compartments.

9. An ice-making machine as claimed in claim 8, in which said heating means comprises electrical heating wires running adjacent said compartments.

10. An ice-making machine as claimed in claim 1, further comprising a

control system controlling an operating cycle in which:

firstly said ice-casting compartments are filled with water;

then said cooling means acts to freeze the water in said compartments; and

then said closure member is lowered to allow the ice cubes to fall onto said closure member and slide into said receptacle.

11. An ice-making machine, as claimed in claim 10, in which said control system includes a timer arranged so that said closure member is lowered a predetermined time period after said compartments are filled with water.